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Davies.—Continuation of the Admiralty Charts and Ordnance Maps.

EXHIBITIONS.—Stanford's Library Map of South America.—Views of the Victoria Falls of River Zambesi, by Mr. T. Baines.

The PRESIDENT congratulated the Society on the reappearance among them of Sir Woodbine Parish, one of their earliest members, and who, having thrown great light on the geography of South America, was now about to make an additional communication respecting that region, of great novelty and importance.

The Paper was entitled—

1. *A Journey across the Southern Andes of Chile, with the object of opening a New Route across the Continent.* By Don GUILLERMO COX.

Translated and Communicated by Sir WOODBINE PARISH, K.C.H.

THE journey, of which the present Paper gave an account, was undertaken towards the close of 1862, by Don Guillermo Cox, a gentleman born in Chile, but of English parentage. Its object was to discover an easy route between the new Chilian settlements on the Pacific coast, in 40° and 41° s. lat., and the river Negro, which, eighty years ago, had been proved by Villarino, a Spanish explorer, to be navigable from the eastern side of the Andes to the Atlantic. He equipped an expedition at his own cost, at Port Montt, a new German settlement, now containing 15,000 inhabitants, opposite to the Island of Chiloe, and proceeded, in December, 1862, by way of the two lakes, Llanquihue and Todos Santos, towards the almost unknown inland sea of Nahuel-huapi. He traversed the lakes in boats, and passed over the dividing ridge of the Andes, by the Roza-lez Pass, which had been discovered in 1855 by one of Señor Cox's party, Don Vincente Gomez. The height of this Pass was determined at 2760 English feet. Arrived at the far end of Lake Nahuel-huapi, on the banks of which they had built a boat for the remaining part of their journey, Señor Cox was rejoiced to find a broad stream issuing from it in the direction of the rivers which flow into the Atlantic. Nine of the sixteen persons who formed the expedition here returned to Port Montt; the rest embarked in one of the boats, and descended the river, which is called the Limay, and forms one of the affluents of the Rio Negro. The voyage was attended with great risks, owing to the rapids; and the various adventures encountered were narrated in a lively manner by the author. At length, when within five miles of the point to which Villarino had attained in ascending the Rio Negro from the Atlantic, the boat

was upset, and the party escaped drowning only to fall into the hands of a tribe of Pampas Indians encamped near the spot. Señor Cox appeased the anger of the cacique, who threatened to put him to death for having visited his territory without permission, by playing a tune on a flageolet he had fortunately saved from the wreck. The cacique farther promised to assist him in reaching the Rio Negro, on condition that he first went to Valdivia for presents. The recrossing of the Cordillera by the pass of Ranco, at a more northerly point towards Valdivia, was accomplished without much difficulty; but the main object of Señor Cox's journey, namely, the opening of a new passage across the continent, was for the time frustrated by the hostility of the Indian tribes; although Señor Cox, so far from being discouraged, was determined to renew the attempt, and writes to Sir Woodbine Parish that, after accomplishing the passage down the river Negro, he shall never rest till he has made a complete exploration of all Patagonia to the south of it.

The PRESIDENT said their best thanks were due to Sir Woodbine Parish for having translated this interesting communication. He was happy to see present that distinguished naval officer, Admiral FitzRoy, Commander of the *Beagle*, who explored the coasts of the region under consideration during five years. He had fixed the altitude of some of the mountains mentioned in the Paper; and these heights were found to be so accurate, that the author had adopted them. His gallant friend had also thrown much light on the natural history of South America, by taking with him Charles Darwin; and as it was not often they had the pleasure of seeing him at their Meetings, his time being much occupied with meteorological inquiries of national importance, he hoped he would now offer a few observations on the subject of the Paper.

Admiral FITZROY, after complimenting Sir Roderick Murchison upon his unintermitting exertions in the cause of Geographical Science, to which he attributed much of the success of the Society, said the interesting Paper which Sir Woodbine Parish had brought before them related to a country where a man does not go, as it were, with his life in his hand. It is a country suited to the constitution, habits, and pursuits of Englishmen. From lat. 45° s. to 35° s., it embraces, on the western side, some of the finest regions in the world. One proof of its adaptability for colonisation by Europeans is, that, during the last ten or twelve years, no less than 15,000 Germans have settled at Port Montt, a spot where, when he was employed in exploring some twenty-nine or thirty years ago, there was not an individual except the aborigines; while a little farther to the north, where at the time of his visit a few fragments of coal were found lying on the surface, and were not thought worth picking up, there are now from twenty to thirty ships at a time loading coal, with all the necessary contrivances on land for that purpose. The region north of Chiloe and Port Montt, and between that and the south of Chile—between Valparaíso and Concepción—is one of the finest he had ever seen. Then, there is the immense range of the Andes running far north and far south, containing an unlimited store of minerals, probably of nearly all kinds. Wherever the mountain-ranges had been examined, from the farthest south, among the broken islands of Tierra del Fuego, up to Central America, they have been found rich in minerals. From the eastern side of these mountains across a

very broad space of flat country, the *Pampas*, there is the easiest possible access. So valuable did the original Spanish explorers consider it, that one of their first objects, after getting a sort of temporary possession of the outskirts of the country, was to push a mission through to the Lake Nahuel-huapi. At the east side of the lake a Jesuit mission was established in 1670, and continued there till about 1715, when it was broken up in consequence of the hostility of the Indians. From that point the whole country to the east was brought within their reach; but the wandering tribes of Indians, having horses which they obtained from the original Spaniards, kept the Spaniards so completely in check, that to this day they have remained in a state of independence. From about lat. 40°, towards the south, the country is open for civilised settlement. The Chilians claim one side, and the people of Buenos Ayres the other; but they have made little or no use of it. Within the last two years he had heard that a colony of Welshmen had gone out to the east of that country, and settled, he believed, near the mouth of the River Chupat, which runs a little to the south of the River Negro. There is also a colony of Chilians in the Straits of Magellan, and there are our own settlements at the Falkland Islands, and perhaps at the mouth of Santa Cruz. So that all sides of that region are beginning to be appropriated by civilised man. The Paper also drew attention to the character of the country. The whole of the west side is well-timbered, most fertile, and very thinly peopled. The readiness with which the Chilians welcome settlers from Europe is shown in some degree by the success of the German colony. He might just refer to the curious fact of there being forests of apple-trees in the neighbourhood of Lake Nahuel-huapi. These apple-trees at the time Villarino went up the river were in full bearing, consisting of several varieties of good edible apples, showing that they must have been grafted. They were either planted and grafted by the missionaries, or they must have been indigenous and improved by the Indians by grafting. This country has also indigenous potatoes. Our potatoes for the last half century have been getting worse, and it has been a matter of surprise to him that no one has taken steps to import the Indian potato from that part of the world. He had eaten three different kinds of potato among the Indians, between Valdivia and Concepcion, and they were better than any he had ever eaten. He might also advert to the great railway works which Mr. Wheelwright is carrying on in South America, between Rosario on the River Plata and the country across the Cordillera of the Andes, also between Buenos Ayres and a port to the south by another railway; from which, when completed, we might hope for great results.

The PRESIDENT said there was another short communication upon the subject of South America, from Consul Hutchinson, which the Secretary would read. As the name of Mr. Wheelwright had been mentioned, he might state that they had marked on the map exhibited to the Meeting, the projected line of the remarkable railroad which Mr. Wheelwright intended to carry right across the Andes. The subject was brought before the British Association, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, by Mr. Wheelwright. His proposal was to carry a railroad at a height of 16,500 feet over a pass in the Andes. The project is a gigantic one; but from the success which has attended Mr. Wheelwright's undertakings on the Pacific, and the power he has shown in moving locomotives up very steep inclines, he had no doubt that, if the capital were supplied him, the enterprise would be found perfectly feasible.

Mr. SPOTTISWOODE then read the following communication from Mr. Consul Hutchinson :—